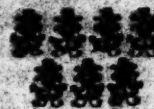
BOOK
Of Merry
RIDDLES:

ery meet and Delightful
for Youth to try their
WITS.



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BOOK

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DIVERS PRETTY RIDDLES, With other Dark SENTENCES.

Question.

WHat Iuvg on the Earth did give the greatest sentence when he did live?

Sol. Pilate when he pronounced sentence of Condemnation against Christ Jesus.

Q. I maid there was that married a man
By whom was many children gotten:
Yet all they died and went away,
Before the mother was begotten.

Sol. It was Eve and her children, who all died ere she was begotten, for she was neither born nor begotten, but created.

Q. What bloody tyrant was that wight,

That with a murdering blow,
The fourth part of the Earth did slay,
Which thou canst tell I trow?

Sol Cain in slaying of his brother Abel.

Q. Foul is my fault that feeds me full
To gorge on mother filth:
I went abroad to seek my fire,
And my wives son I do desire:
Such an one the man must be,
As the Son of man to me.

Sol. Joseph went to seek Christ, whom he found in the Temple, Preaching amongst those of the Synagogue.

Q. What was that God commanded to be done, and was not done, and yet God was well pleased?

Sol. The sacrificing of Isaac.

Q. In what place crew the Cock so loud that all men heard it out of doubt.

Sol. In the Ark of Noah.

Q. Judg of me by perfect skill,
My youths restored by casting bill.

Sol. An Eagle.

Q. When I am old, I cast my skin,
Wherein I do come young again.

Sol. A Snake.

Q. White I am and black withal,
I have eyes yet am blind:
Eain nor love not without brawl,

I do procure as you shall find.

Sol. Dice.

Q. I wound the heart & please the eye,
Tell me what I am by and by?

Sol. Beauty.

Q. I am within as white as Snow,
Without as green as herbs that grow:
I am higher than a house,
And yet am lesser than a Mouse.

Sol. A Walnut hanging on a tree.

Q. What Mother a child doth beget,
And the of it is got again?
Which although strange seems to be,
Yet it is true I tell you plain.

Sol. Water turning to ice, and ice again turning to water.

Q. 'Tis black without & black within
And hath four corners as I join.

Sol. I do surfe.

Q. Oedipus that wholesome hast resolved a great doubt,
Unfold this Riddle unto me that now I shall put out,
When I did live, then was I dumb, and yet did yield no harmony:
But being dead, I do afford most pleasant melody.

Sol. Any musick instrument that is of wood.

Q. Yet once again I mean to prove thy skill in a jest:
Which if thou dost resolve to me, then settest thy mind at rest.
Whether was man created first before the beard or else.
The beard before the man? that shew and thou shalt win the bells.
Sol. All creature were created before man in their kind,
And so was the bearded Goat, as we in books do find.
Q. In at window when I do look, (Beat not your brain long about this),
Then in the house about I go, Now tell me quickly what is this?
Sol. The shining of the Sun.
Q. There dwels four sisters near this town,
In favour like, and like in gown:
When they run for a mile to win,
At once they do begin:
One runs as fast as doth the other,
Yet cannot overtake each other.
Sol. The four wings of a Mill.
Q. When it through the wood doth go it toucheth every thing below?
Sol. It is Snow.
Q. When through the wood it goeth,

It toucheth never a thing foolishly.

Sol. A penny in a plain purse.

Q. What is that most neither hath, within a house made of plate,

Sol. The hangers where the Pot-hooks hang upon.

Q. I am foul to look unto,
Yet many seek me for to win.
Not for my beauty nor my skin.
But for my wealth and force to know;
Hard is my meat whereby I live,
Yet I bring men to dainty fare:
If I were not then, All Knights would
Losing this song so bold,
Nutmeg, Ginger, Cinnamon, & Cloves,
They gave us this jolly red nose.
The fourth part of the Earth I shew,
The Times and hours as they do go,
As needful am I to mankind,
As any thing that they can find:
Many do take me for their guide,
Who otherwise would run aside.

Sol. It is a Loadstone, for without it no Pilate were able to guide a Ship in the Ocean Seas.

Q. I am the chief strength of the land, all men upon four pillars I stand:
And if these four should fail indeed,
Then can I find two more at need?

And the fifth shall not stand a five,
Four lights I have to be my guide,
For it is far brighter then the Sun,
And doth remain when life is gone,
And though one corps the heavy it wear
No Monster yet it is I swear:
Unknit this knot and tell to me,
At leisure Sir, what I might be.

Sol. A horse-man being on horse-back, who hath four Eyes with those of his horse, and the fifth in his reasonable soul, whereby he is chiefly guided, and is not subject unto death.

Q. Six Hares did come within a plain whom hounds had started out of their nest
Hill up, hill down they came amain,
till they were ready and did rest;
They caught him once and scapt again,
more eager went they than before;
And took more pain then (as I win)
to bear away the gain and more,
The hounds and hunters all were one,
each liked his game, and took his prey:
But when their sport was past and done,
they left their Hares and came away.

Sol. 'Tis a match at Bowls played in a Bowling-alley.

Q. Ten mens length, and ten mens strength, and ten men cannot break it.

Sol.

Sol. A table rope which ten men can not break by force.

Q. A man I was, a man I am:
But yet as tame as any Lamb,
Though I am blind, the way I shew,
Which all that see must go:
And to put your mind out of doubt,
Eight I have that bear about,
My burthen more then any hath,
Unless he be in my estate;
In time therefore do learn of me,
As I before have done of thee.
If he had known that brought my woe
Ventured I had upon his foe,
But for his fault we subject be,
To this estate in which you see me:
I am that which you least desire,
But yet that you should most require,
Guess what I am (good Sir) therefore,
Before you do knock at the door.

Sol. It is a dead man, and these four that do carry him to his grave, with Adam our first Parent, who brought death into the world.

Q. In open field I cannot lie,
And yet I may rest quietly,
In a box of Ivory.

Sol. It is a feather in a windy day.

Q. I am as little as a nit,

and

And feedes the King at every bit.

Sol. Salt.

Q. Who weares his end about his midle
Once in his time? tell me this riddle.

Sol. A Thief, whose armes are tied with the halter, wherewith he shall be executed.

Q. My flesh and skin is red,
But white is all my heart,
Where round about the wall is set,
Beaten with every dart.

Sol. It is a cherry, and a cherry-stone:

Q. Yonder it is, and here I have it.

Sol. A mans breath, or other living creatures.

Q. What wight is he doth others feed,
And yet himself doth dye for need?

Sol. It is a preacher instructing others, and doth quite contrary to his own doctrine, and by that means starveth his own Soul.

Q. Tell me good sir whom I might be,
A Father I had, but Mother none:
Yet many Mother have had of me,
Who all to earth with me are gone.

Sol. Our first parent Eve who had no Mother, and no other Father but God Almighty.

Q. What is most like a horse.

(Be-

(Besides a Mare he means)
That feedeth upon hay and grass,
Upon Pease and upon Beans.

Sol. It is a Gelding.

Q. My husband gives two gowns to me
Of sundry colours every year:
Green is the one which I do wear,
So long till it be all thread bear;
White is the other as the Sun,
Of many pieces up and down:
Yet like to that few workmen can,
Devise to make another gown,
The wifer sort, wherein they dote,
Do call me fool upon a foy,
But yet of me they make a note:
That death is past when I do joy.

Sol. It is a Mulberry-tree green in the summer, and white with snow in the winter, which in Latin is cal'd Morus, which signifieth in Greek, a fool: it is a tree of this nature, that it will not cast any buds before all other trees have, whereby we certainly know when she begins to bud that the cold and winter is altogether past for that present season.

Q. A Ship there drives upon the tide,
That Sails doth bear and hath no mast,
An oar she had on each side,
And doth the Snow in whiteness pass,

in

In her front wears two lanthorns bright
but when she is upon point to fall,
Then lend an ear, for great delight,
of Musick she affords to all.

Sol. It is a Swan, who being near her death sings most sweetly, as Authours record.

Q. Round I am, yet cannot rest,
When I am spited of the best.

Sol. A tennits ball, when two good players play together.

Q. What man is he of wit so base,
That wears both his eyes in a case,
For fear of hurting them it is,
And I do find it not amiss.

Sol. It is he that cannot see well without spectacles and doth carry them about him in a case for fear of breaking them.

Q. My prey I seek in fields and Woods about,
And have more teeth than beasts within the land,
And whensoever my game I have found out.
Then take I bring it to my Masters hand
Upon my back the Deer he lays,
And there doth sometime more,
He shuts me up and goes his ways,
Better contented than before.

Sol.

Sol. It is a comb, and a louse kill'd upon the back of it.

Q. A tree there is that boughs doth bear
In number five as I do know,
Of equal length they never were,
And on their tops do horns grow:
Yet they are tied about with gold,
Except the longest without doubt,
Which for ufes sake may be controul'd,
If it with Gold were hopt about.

Sol. It is ones hand, and his fingers that are full of Gold Rings, the middlemost except, because a Ring doth not fit that finger.

Q. I was not, I am not, and shall not be,
yet I do walk as men may see,
I run and speak to get a fee,
though I am not in any degree.

Sol. It was a man whose Sirname was Not.

Q. Deaf I am and cannot hear,
and when I work I feel no pain:
Some do curse me, some speak me fair,
though well I know it is in vain.

Sol. Dice and Dicers.

Q. In what place of the Earth,
doth the skie seem to be,
No broader than a yard or twain?
I pray thee tell me.

Sol.

Sol. In the bottom of a well.

Q. A thing I take and that I lose,
yet nothing to my woe,
And that I took not, that I keep,
yet would it fain forgo,

Sol. He that is all lowsie, those lice which he takes he throws them away, and those that he cannot take he keeps them still and yet would fain be rid of them.

Q. What thing is only upon the earth not subject unto fear:
Nor doth not weigh the threatnings of tyrants pin or hair?

Sol. It is a good Conscience.

Q. What doth with the root upwards grow,
And downwards with his head doth show.

Sol. It is an Icicle.

Q. What is lesser than a Mouse,
And hath more windows then a House?

Sol. It is a Spider in the midst of his web, or else a thimble.

Q. I do walk, yet I do not go,
I do drink, yet no thirst slack,
I do eat yet not feed,
I do walk yet no work make.

Sol. It is a man that dreams, who in his dream seems to do all these things, and indeed does none of them.

Q

Q. Is bitter as gall,
Is sweet as milk,
Is high as a hall, and hard withal,

Sol. It is a Walnut upon a Tree.

Q. I am no fish, nor flesh, nor voice,
Yet when I am born I make a noise;

Sol. A Fart, or the Thunder.

Q. When we by the way do go,
Upon our shoulders we do bear away,
If we were not, then many should be so
Wet to the skin in a rainy day.

Sol. Masons, Tylers, and men of such like occupation, carrying ladders upon their shoulders, to build and tile houses.

Q. M. and I. made great moan,
When C. upon C. was left alone;

Sol. Mary and John made great moan, when Christ upon the Crosse was left alone:

Q. When I to the wood do go,
Then my head forward I do show.

Sol. It is an Ax.

Q. In me are many shining lights.

Sol. It is a burning Candle.

Q. In the last minute of mine age,
I do way young again.
And have so still continued,
Since the world did first begin.

Sol. It is the Moon.

Q. I do owe most yet nothing pay;
Evil I am the worst I say.
Sol. Ingratitude, which monster receiveth good turns and payeth Vengeance.
Q. What men are those that backwards gain,
Their small living not without pain.
Sol. Gardners and Rope-makers.
Q. Old I am when I was born,
And when I am hatcht take heed of me,
Or else thou mayst soon be forlorn,
If thou dost nothing look to thee.
Sol. The grudg of a secret enemy long conceived in mind ere it be put in execution
Q. Hitty titty within the wall,
And hitty titty without the wall,
If you touch hitty titty my joy,
Hitty titty will bite thy boy.
Sol. It is a nettle.
Q. Chink clank under a bank,
Ten about four near the flank.
Sol. A maid milking of a Cow.
Q. Tip tap in a gap,
As many feet as a hundred sheep.
Sol. It is Hail when it falls.
Q. A wicked Father did beget,
A daughter fit unto his hand:
But such good children she did get,

That

That are the drops of every Land,

Sol. The Devil begat sin, and sin procured good Laws, which are the stayes of all governments.

Q. Gods-pæd fair Ladyes,
I am sent I cannot tell to whom,
And I do bring I cannot tell what,
I count her wife that tells me that.

Sol. A lover sent to his love a messenger to put her in mind of her promise as to come unto him, and she sent back this answer unto him.

Tell thy Master in my Name,
When trees are turned and wells be dry,
And dead with quick, then come I.

Meaning at midnight, when firebrands should be turned upwards, the pots should be empty, and the fire raked up with the cold ashes, then she would come.

Q. I know a child born of my mother, natural as other children be.
That is neither my sister nor my brother answer me shortly what is he?

Sol. It is the person that speaketh the word, for he is neither brother nor sister to himself.

Q. I have a smith without a hand;
That doth the work that no man can:
He forgeth bonds, and do men case,

Without any fire in his furnace?

Sol. It is a Bee that maketh Honey and Wax.

Q. What is that in the morning upon four legs doth go;
About noon standeth fast upon two and no more;
In the evening again it hath no less than three in store:
Which tell me Sir, art thou not he, whom I do take thee for?

Sol. It is a man; for when he is a child then he doth creep upon hand and foot, but when he is a man, then he standeth strait upon two legs, when he is old & decrepit besides his legs, then he useth a staff to support his body. This riddle gave Sphinx a Serpent, to the passengers that went by her den: & those that could not resolve it, them she devoured, and so Oepidus at last passing by & having resolv'd the doubt, did rid his Country of this evil incorporate.

Q. As round as any hoop I am, most part when it is day:
But by night then am I long, as any rule I lay.

Sol. It is a womans girdle which she wears about her middle.

Q. I eate my nurse and feeds me full,

Con-

Consume my mother that bears me still,
And I am such unthankful wight,
That when I dye and lose my sight,
I make all blind that do delight.

Sol. The Sun.

Q. I am cal'd by the name of man,
Yet am as little as a mouse;
When winter comes I love to be,
With my red gorget near the house.

Sol. A Bird called Robin Red-breft.

Q. Although my body little is,
yet I do please the hearers ear:
If I were tane it were not amiss,
then I could live in lesser fear.

Sol. The Nightingale.

Q. What is it more eyes doth wear,
then forty men within the Land;
Which glister like the Chrystal clear
against the Sun when they do stand.

Sol. A Peacocks tail.

Q. When I go to the water side,
at home I leave my heart behind.
Tell me what I am without pride,
if it by any means you find.

Sol. It is a Pillow-bear.

Q. My head is round my body small,
yet I am that which savours all.

Sol. It is Pepper and Salt.

Q. Head and eyes I am onely,

What I may be tell me.

Sol. A button of Copper or Mettel,

Q. A bird upon the house I saw.
Six legs it had yet but one tayl,
Two legs more then a Daw,
Name me this Bird and win the Ale.

Sol. A Hearnshow had taken a Frog, and brought in to her young ones in the nest, made upon the top of the house.

Q. All my body belly is,
and lesser then my mouth is not:
I do contain what makes man mad,
What I am Sir, pray tell me that?

Sol. A Malt-sack full of Malt wherewith strong drink is brewed.

Q. My belly is bigger then all the rest,
Where men use to put the best,
Broad is my foot short is my neck,
If ill you use me fear a check.

Sol. A bottle made of Glass.

Q. My coat is green and I can prate,
Of divers things about my grate,
In such a prison I am set,
That hath more loop-hole then a net.

Sol, A Parrat in a Cage of Wire.

Q. I do assemble many a wight,
yet I keep me out of their eye,
And do once come in their sight,
yet every day they may see me.

Sol.

Sol. A Bell towling to a Hermon.

Q. What Mill is that hath two win, which fly about with the wind,
A greasie Miller looks to all things, whiles it doth turn and doth not grind.

Sol. It is a Jack, and a greasie Miller is the Cook.

Q. It is no bigger than a Plumb,
And yet serves the King,
From Town to Town.

Sol. It is an Eye.

Q. It was not, nor is not,
nor never will be,
Hold up your hand
And you shall see.

Sol. It is the little finger, that was not, nor is not, nor will it be so great as the rest of the fingers.

Q. Down in the yard I have three swine
The more meat I give them,
the louder they cry;
The lesser I give them,
the stiller they lye.

Sol. It is three Mills.

Q. There dwels a shoomaker néer the hall
That makes his shoes without an awl,
They that buy of them, do not wear
Yet men of them have many a pair.

Sol. It is a Smith, that makes shoes for Horses.

Q.

Q. Riddle me, riddle me what is this? Two legs sate upon three, with one leg in his hand, in came four legs and snatcht away one leg, then upstarts two legs, and flung three legs at four legs, and so got one leg again.

Sol. A man sitting upon a three footed stool, with a leg of Mutton in his hand, a dog came and snatcht it from him, and he flung a three footed stool at the dog, and so got the leg of Mutton again.

Q. I have a Meadow and in that Meadow are ten Oaks, under every Oke are ten Coats, and in every Coat are ten Sows, and every Sow hath ten Pigs, tell me how many Pigs will be of these.

Sol. Ten thousand.

FINIS.